

Thank you very much Mr Schweizer. And now I have the honour to give the floor to Professor Yehuda Bauer to deliver his speech.

Thank you very much Mr Minister. Let me first of all express the deep gratitude not only of myself but, I am sure, of all my colleagues here for the way in which our Hungarian friends have organised this meeting and the general welcome and ambiance that we are partners in. It really far exceeds the most optimistic expectations, and I think we will all be very grateful for that.

We are eight years young. In May 1998, Mr Göran Persson, the Swedish prime minister, initiated the Task Force with just three countries. We are a child of eight years of age, and we are expanding. We are now 24 governments providing a political umbrella for educational memory and research efforts, and we are growing unexpectedly and really quite beyond what we could have foreseen eight years ago.

Now, I would like to address a very central issue, and I can assure you, you won't suffer a great deal of time. As Henry VIII said to each one of his wives, I won't keep you long. The reason that I want to address the question of the relationship between the Holocaust and other genocides is because this comes up in practically everything that we do. After all, I don't have to explain in this round that the Holocaust was a genocide. But there are other genocides and they are still going on. And it doesn't look as though it's going to be stopped in the immediate present or future, unfortunately, although efforts are being made to do so. So why don't we deal with other genocides as the central issue, and why do we deal with the Holocaust? We all know that in December 1948, the Convention [on] the Prevention [and Punishment] of the Crime of Genocide was adopted by the United Nations, and in the meantime it has been ratified by most countries in the world. The definition of genocide in the convention is very problematic. It was directly connected to the Holocaust because the person who initiated it, who pushed it, who tried to include in it his own definition—he wasn't quite successful—was a Polish-Jewish refugee lawyer in New York by the name of Rafael Lemkin. The genocide convention contains the marks of his personality and his effort. But it's not exactly what he wanted, obviously, because the convention was a result of horse trading between the West and the Soviet Union. The convention, as you probably all know, talks about the intent to eliminate or annihilate an ethnic, national, racial, or religious group as such in part or in whole, and then it mentions five points to tell you what a genocide is:

- 1) killing of the members of the group
- 2) harming members of the group physically or mentally
- 3) creating conditions of life that make the existence of the group impossible
- 4) prevention of births
- 5) kidnapping of children

Should all these together be what constitutes a genocide? Each one of them? Is that all, or are there maybe other elements? What do you mean when you say “in part or in whole”? When, as in the case of the Jews, every single person who was defined by the perpetrators as being Jewish was to be killed, then you can’t kidnap children because they are all dead. You can’t prevent births because all the mothers are killed, and to shove people into gas chambers is not exactly creating conditions of life that make the existence of the group impossible. So there are problems with this and I don’t know of a single academic in the world who will agree with the definition in the convention. And why include religious groups and not political groups? After all, the difference between ethnic, national, and so-called racial groups and the others is that you are born into an ethnic or national group. If you are born a Hungarian or a Pole or a Chinese or a Russian, then, when you grow up, it’s too late to choose your parents, you are stuck with it. But if you are a member of a religious faith, then, in theory—by no means always in practice—you can choose. If you were born a Catholic during the religious wars in the 16th century in Europe under the rule of *cuius regio, eius religio*, your governor, your duke, your ruler determined which religion you observed, and then you may have had to change from one to the other. If you didn’t, you either moved to another place, or you were killed. But in principle you could choose. Hundreds of thousands of Jews converted to Christianity in the Middle Ages. It’s not that they necessarily chose to do so, but they had the alternative of either converting or fleeing. And the same applied to other religions. As far as politics go, in theory you can choose your politics. Millions of devoted Communists became devoted Nazis in Germany, and in East Germany after the war millions of devoted Nazis became devoted Communists again. The same applies to other countries and in other situations, so if you include religious groups, why not include political groups? When the Stockholm Forum of 2004 was organised, I went to Prime Minister Persson with a proposal of a keynote speech, and we discussed this in detail; there were corrections and so on, my colleagues in the academic preparation group corrected, changed, and so forth. In the end, we decided not to engage in the discussion about definitions. It would have led us nowhere. So rather than define the Holocaust, we described what we meant by genocidal events, and we identified four. First of all, we stated [that] a mass murder, according to the genocide convention of the United Nations, is a genocide. Secondly, political mass murder, which was not accepted by the Soviet Union in 1948, is a genocide or a genocidal event. Thirdly, ethnic cleansing, when the purpose is to eliminate a group as such, is a genocidal massacre if accompanied by mass murder. Fourth, global ideologies seeking to rule the world, to control the world, and that [are] accompan[ied] by an attempt to force that ideology upon the world by mass killings, is a genocidal act. Now, interestingly enough, if you look at the Shoah, all the four descriptions fit it, and some genocides can be defined or can be described in one or two or three of these ways of describing genocidal events. But the genocide convention has one tremendous advantage: It is accepted by most countries of the world, although it has never been acted upon, and it is part of international law, and therefore you can appeal

to it, you can address it. It's a focal point around which you can then organise something you want to do regarding genocide prevention.

There have been many genocides. We have got one wonderful historian here amongst us who wrote about this. He is Steven Katz. He showed us in his book *The Holocaust in Historical Context* that this is not new, that genocidal massacres have been happening since time immemorial and most likely before that. And so, if this is ingrained in us, the question arises: Can we prevent it? Is there any point in trying to do what we are doing here, in the ITF? My own answer is yes, although, yes, it is ingrained in us, yes, we are the only predatory mammals that kill our own kind in huge numbers. But together with that instinct, we have another instinct, which is the opposite. We are now remembering a date connected with Sigmund Freud, but he defined the life instinct in much too sexual terms. It's much more generalised: There is an instinct within us that enables us to rescue other human beings, in extreme situations, although we may not have had any connection with them. There is an instinct within us to rescue people—animals of our own kind, if you want to put it that way. It's a struggle between two extremes within us, and all we are doing in all our work is trying to move ourselves and others from nearer one extreme to nearer another extreme.

What are the parallels between the Holocaust and other genocides? In my view they are very clear: The first and main one is that the suffering of the victims is always the same. In all genocides, in all mass killings, in all mass violence, suffering and victimhood are always the same. There is no better genocide or worse genocide. There is no better murder or worse murder. There is no better killing of children or worse killing of children. There is no better torture or worse torture. It's always the same; there is no scale of suffering. The victims always are suffering the same kind of pain. The second is that all mass killings, all genocidal acts, will always be done with the best possible technological means at the disposal of the perpetrator. Nazi Germany had gas, so they used it. The Armenian genocide didn't happen at the time when they had gas so it wasn't used. In Rwanda the Hutu perpetrators did not have the tremendous military machine that Nazi Germany had, so they didn't use it, but they used other means that they had at their disposal, the best they had. And that is paralleled in every type of mass violence and mass killing and genocidal events that you can think of.

Where are the differences? First of all, the Holocaust happened not at the margins of civilisation. It happened in the centre, in not only Germany, but in Europe, a Europe which produced the most wonderful, the most wonderful achievements of civilisation. The centre was, of course, Germany. It came as the great poet Paul Celan said: *Der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland*. Death is a master from Germany. But Germany is Beethoven, it's Brahms, it's Schiller, it's Goethe, it's Schopenhauer. Germany is the centre of the most wonderful achievements of humanistic civilisation. Masses of Jews fled to Germany from Eastern Europe because it was the example of a wonderful progressive civilisation. And yet it happened there. This is unprecedented. In

stages, Nazi Germany wanted to find, register, dispossess, humiliate, concentrate, transport, and kill every single person they defined as being Jewish. Not only in Germany or Europe, but ultimately everywhere in the world. You can read it in one of the few stenographic protocols of any meetings of Hitler with others. On November 28, 1941, Hitler met with the then-leader of the Palestinian National Movement, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj-Amin al-Husseini. And he says there very clearly: Nazi Germany will deal with the Jews everywhere the way it is dealing with them in Europe everywhere, and of course we know that they intended to control the world together with allies. For the first time a universally conceived genocide happened. Thirdly there was the ideology. Every genocide is always rationalised by an ideology, and that ideology is always based on pragmatic factors. The ideas that come up are couched in ideological language, but it's really about land, about economy, about power, about military interests, about empire, about national interests. The Jews didn't have an empire, the Jews didn't have a nation, the Jews didn't have an economy. The story about Jewish control of the German economy is nonsense. So what was it? It was, to use Marxist terminology for one, it had nothing to do with the social or economic or political basis, it was superstructure, ideology, pure ideology. They talked about Jewish control of the world, which was a mirror image of the Nazi desire to control the world. They spouted the idea that the Jews were using the blood of children, Christian children (today, it's Muslim children), that they inject into their special food. They propagandized the idea that the Jews were corrupting civilisation. All this had nothing to do with the real Jewish people in Europe. These were purely ideological concepts, and the important thing to remember is that there has never been a genocide before the Shoah that was based on pure and undiluted ideology. It was totally non-pragmatic. Look, we are here in Budapest. They could have used the Jews in the provinces of Hungary for slave labour that would have been useful to them. As they took the Jewish property anyway, it wasn't about property: If you loot somebody's property, you could still use the people whom you had robbed. But no, they deported them to be killed. Why? Pure ideology. The fourth element is racism. My friends, there are no races. We all come originally from East Africa. DNA research has proved that beyond any possibility of doubt. Whenever it was—300,000 years ago, half a million years ago, one million years ago—we all are originally Africans. Some of our ancestors stayed too much time in northern climates, so the pigmentation changed a bit. But there are no races, whether you are a Central African pygmy, or an aborigine in Australia, Mr Bush, or Mrs Merkel, or Mr Olmert, or Albert Einstein, we all come from the same place. There are no races, so on the basis of this non-science, the Nazis wanted to create something which was utterly new, completely new, a hierarchy of races, ruled by the Nordic peoples of the Aryan race, an ideological, artificial construct. We have had changes of empire, changes of nations, one religion instead of another, one class instead of another. The French Revolution established a government that was led by the bourgeoisie instead of the feudal aristocracy before, so that to put one class instead of another, the working class instead of the bourgeoisie, is nothing new; therefore Communism is nothing really new. But race, something built on race? That's new. And they had to have an anti-race, a satanic race, because there was a god, his name was Adolf Hitler, and his presumable successor, so there had to be a

Satan. The devil—the Satan—was the Jews, so they had to be eliminated. These things are unprecedented. But that means that the Holocaust was a precedent, or could be a precedent. I don't use the term "uniqueness" of the Holocaust because uniqueness would mean that it can't happen again. But it can, it was done by humans for human reasons, and anything that's done by humans can be repeated. That's why we teach it, that's why the Holocaust is the centre from which we teach other things. That's why this organisation deals with the Holocaust as its central focal point.

And from there, yes, from there we deal with the context. Genocide is one context, Jewish history is another context, and there are other contexts as well. But when we discuss the genocidal context we have to remember that every genocide is specific. When you deal with Rwanda, you deal with Tutsi, not with people from Kamchatka. Today, when you deal with Darfur, you deal with the specific Black ethnicities of the Fur, the Zaghawa, the Masaalit, and the others, and with the murderers, the Bedouins of the Rizeigat people. These are specific people with specific histories. Every genocidal event is specific; therefore, one of the main contexts is Jewish history, another context is European history, and the history of each individual country in Europe specifically. Another context is world history, so you have several contexts. Genocide is a very important context in which the Holocaust has to be considered. You concentrate on the Holocaust and from there you go on to other genocidal events. And when you examine the context of the genocide of the Jews, antisemitism is another central context. Therefore we here in the ITF react, almost instinctively I might say, when we see antisemitism raising its head anywhere, when political groups appear that produce or reproduce antisemitic propaganda. Because that's how the Holocaust began, and so we have to deal with that.

Let me repeat why we deal with the Holocaust as the central issue. We do that because it's an unprecedented genocide that could become a precedent, because it is connected in its core with the inclination of humans to kill each other in large numbers, because it has unfortunately become the paradigmatic genocide, and, as such, it did, does, and will find its representation increasingly in literature, and in art and in any kind of human expression that you want to think about. This cannot be stopped. Dealing with the Holocaust will inevitably arouse opposition and argument and controversy. It is a central event in human history, and that's why we deal with it. It is not past, it is present. And by dealing with it, we try to address the past from which it comes and the future to which it may lead, if we are not careful.

As I said at the beginning, we started on a road. We are walking on that road. We are only eight years old, we are growing, we are changing, but we are addressing the same problem. And I think I must say that while at the very beginning in May 1998 we didn't think that this organisation would be the kind of thing that we see now as we sit around this table, we did think that this process cannot be stopped. And I still remember very

clearly that Mr Persson said to me: "Look, we are starting something, we don't know where it will lead, but we must do it!" Because if we don't, then we fail in our basic human responsibility.

Thank you.